Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Requesting
2. What If... Mapleshade's Kits Hadn't Drowned?

Introduction and Requesting

Nihao, fellow Warriors lovers. This book is a series of one-shots dedicated to what-if? scenarios.

I do not own the Warriors series. Erin Hunter owns the series. The ladies who wrote these books have full ownership over these series. This book would not be possible without them.

As for requests, they will almost always be open, unless I have a lot of them piling up in my inbox. If you want to request a what-if scenario, **please *DM it to me. Do not leave it in the comments section. It will not be written unless you DM it to me. It is easier for me to do the requests if they are DM'd to me.***

So, without further ado...

Let's get this book started.

What If... Mapleshade's Kits Hadn't Drowned?

Author's Note: I looked online and in the book, but it did not mention the name of the RiverClan cat who was the medicine cat at the time, so I made up a name for the medicine cat. Please tell me if I am inaccurate and I will fix it! Without further ado, here is my very first what-if headcanon!

"Go, you'll be fine!" Mapleshade meowed desperately to Petalkit and Larchkit. They looked apprehensive, but hopped into the river anyway. Mapleshade nudged Patchkit toward the river.

"Go!" She rasped to him. His eyes shone with fear- but he slowly padded toward the river. Mapleshade jumped into the river with him. She grabbed him by the scruff and swam him across, to the other side of the river. She plopped him down onto the land in front of her.

"Help us, mama!" Petalkit wailed as her head went under. Mapleshade gasped.

"Stay here!" She ordered Patchkit. He nodded.

Mapleshade swam toward Petalkit and Larchkit. She grabbed Petalkit by the scruff.

"Hold onto my tail, Larchkit!" Mapleshade yowled through Petalkit's fluffy scruff. Larchkit struggled to swim toward Mapleshade, but he was able to nab her tail in his teeth. She winced in pain, but she shook it off and swam toward the shore.

Mapleshade's paws cut through the water, churning nonstop. She unsheathed her claws and lunged toward the shore on the RiverClan side, with Patchkit mewling desperately, hoping that his mother would make it across safely.

Mapleshade's claws hooked into the land, and she pushed herself up. She dropped Petalkit a bit roughly on the ground, but Petalkit didn't notice. Mapleshade's tail hurt a lot from Larchkit biting on it so hard, but she didn't care- her kits were safe.

Mapleshade lowered her tail and set Larchkit on the ground. Her three kits were shivering from the cold water. She began licking them.

She licked Petalkit first, making short, but very effective, work of it. She nudged Patchkit closer to her in an effort to keep him warm while she licked Larchkit. Once she had licked Larchkit dry, she gently nudged him toward Petalkit.

She was half-done with Patchkit when she heard pawsteps. She whipped around to see a patrol of RiverClan cats.

"Appledusk!" Mapleshade half-yowled, half-purred.

"Mapleshade? What are you doing here? Are those the kits?" Appledusk rushed over to her.

"Eeltail, Splashfoot! Each of you, take a kit. I'm assuming Mapleshade will want to carry the kit she's with right now." Appledusk meowed. The other two warriors nodded, pick up a kit each, and trotted toward the Riverside camp.

Once they were gone, Appledusk turned to Mapleshade.

"They're beautiful." Appledusk purred, licking Mapleshade's ear. "What are their names? And what were you thinking, trying to get our kits across the river during a flood?! You're lucky you and our kits are alive!"

"Ravenwing found out. He received an omen and didn't even let me explain." Mapleshade meowed scornfully. "So ThunderClan exiled me- we have nowhere else to go, so I brought them to RiverClan, their father's Clan."

"And, to answer your question, the kit that looks like me- the one right next to me- is Patchkit." Mapleshade meowed. Patchkit let out a small squeak at the mention of his name.

"Hi! Who're you?" Patchkit squeaked curiously.

"I told you about him, remember, Patchkit? He's your father, Appledusk." Mapleshade explained to Patchkit. He nodded his head a bit.

"The she-kit who looks like you, is Petalkit, and the tom, who also looks like you, is-" Mapleshade started, but was cut off by Appledusk.

"Applekit?" Appledusk meowed hopefully, yet playfully. Mapleshade purred.

"No, mouse-brain. His name is Larchkit." Mapleshade purred, giving Appledusk a playful, gentle, cuff on the ear. Appledusk put on a look of mock hurt.

"So you didn't name one after me?" Appledusk meowed dramatically. Mapleshade rolled her eyes playfully.

"I couldn't exactly do that, anyways. They'd get suspicious if I named one of my kits after you." Mapleshade mewed. "Anyway- we can catch up later. Let's go, or they'll be questioning where we are."

Appledusk nodded, and ran after Splashfoot and Eeltail. Mapleshade licked Patchkit once more before she picked him up gently by the scruff, following Appledusk toward RiverClan's camp.

Appledusk nosed his way through the reeds covering the entrance to the RiverClan camp. Mapleshade followed. A warrior was just a fox-length away from the entrance.

"We need to speak with Darkstar." Appledusk meowed- it sounded a bit more like an order, but the warrior just nodded and Appledusk padded past, into the very heart of camp where all of RiverClan was gathered. Reedshine rushed over to him.

"Appledusk! Are you alright?!" Reedshine fretted. She put her tail on Appledusk's back. He shook her dark orange tail off of his back, and took a step back next to Mapleshade.

"And what's *she* doing here?" Reedshine looked at Mapleshade a hint of a snarl in her voice.

"I'm fine." Appledusk growled darkly. He nodded at Mapleshade, and padded toward the High Rock to face Darkstar.

Ha! Take that, Reedshine! Appledusk is mine, and I have his kits to prove it! Mapleshade thought triumphantly. She padded next to Appledusk, leaving Reedshine hurt and confused, standing in the very same spot she had been a minute ago.

"Appledusk." Darkstar meowed calmly from the High Rock. Her black fur seemed to shine like a star in the sunlight. Her eyes gleamed with suspicion, but there was a small, very unnoticeable, gleam of curiosity- or was it questioning? Was it a gleam of questioning, ready to question Appledusk about his true motives? Or was it curiosity, awaiting Mapleshade's explanation of why Mapleshade had crossed into RiverClan territory, and brought her kits to RiverClan? No cat could tell.

"Is it true? Are these your kits?" Darkstar jerked her head toward Spashfoot and Eeltail, who were holding Larchkit and Petalkit.

Appledusk looked Darkstar right in the eyes, a gleam of defiance in his. He gave a slow, yet confident nod.

"Yes. These are my kits. Mapleshade and I's. They're *our* kits." Appledusk meowed loudly, so that the whole Clan could hear. There were murmurs of disapproval, yowls of shock and outrage, and some cats just stood there, jaws wide open. Mapleshade was tempted to say something about their mouths catching flies, and opened her mouth to growl a retort, but thought better of it and clamped her jaw shut. That would not be a way to get on Darkstar's good side.

Mapleshade looked at Reedshine to see her reaction. Reedshine's dark orange tail drooped in between her legs, and her jaw was slightly open. Reedshine's green eyes gleamed with hurt, confusion, shock, some anger, and various other emotions.

Mapleshade grinned a bit at the sight of Reedshine so hurt.

I told you. Appledusk is mine. He promised he'd love me, and only me. Mapleshade thought.

"You are aware that you have broken the Warrior Code by becoming mates with a cat from another cat? And having kits with her?" Darkstar meowed, a dangerous tone edging her voice.

"Yes. I- I am aware." Appledusk meowed. "But I love Mapleshade. You won't be able to change that. When I first started meeting her, I thought- and knew, somewhere deep down- that it was a mistake. But I love her more than the Warrior Code could ever mean. And if you cannot accept that fact- so be it."

Mapleshade silently purred.

Darkstar looked extremely hesitant. She stayed silent for what seemed like moons, but she finally let out a soft, yet steady meow.

"Appledusk- but how will I ever be able to trust you again?" Darkstar asked. Silence.

Mapleshade interfered, knowing that the situation would be almost impossible to defuse once it got any more heated. She gently set Patchkit on the ground next to her.

"I'm sorry to interrupt, but, Darkstar... I know that you may not trust Appledusk right now, and that's understandable. But he is a loyal and brave warrior." Mapleshade meowed defiantly to Darkstar. "And if you choose to not let me stay, I understand. But Appledusk doesn't deserve to be exiled."

Darkstar thought about the topic. Mapleshade could visibly see the doubt, the distrust, the anger, the empathy, and most of all... The uncertainty.

After what seemed like a thousand moons, Darkstar spoke.

"I will allow you to stay in RiverClan, Appledusk. You can thank Mapleshade for that. But you will have to earn back the trust of your Clanmates- me included. My decision is final." Darkstar meowed, making her final decision. Appledusk nodded gratefully.

"Thank you, Darkstar. I swear on my life that I will remain loyal to RiverClan and the Warrior Code from thus day forward." Appledusk meowed gratefully, taking a step back.

"As for you, Mapleshade," Darkstar turned toward Mapleshade. "What are you and your kits doing on RiverClan territory?"

"ThunderClan exiled me after they found out who the father of the kits was." Mapleshade explained sadly, though bitterness was clear in her tone. "So I brought them to RiverClan, their father's Clan."

Darkstar nodded, and you could visibly see that she was thinking hard.

"If I were to let you stay the night, and maybe even join the Clan, will you promise to remain loyal the RiverClan, and RiverClan alone?" Darkstar asked skeptically. Mapleshade nodded confidently.

"Yes. I swear on my life that I will protect RiverClan with my life, and that I will remain loyal to RiverClan, and only to RiverClan for as long as the stars shine." Mapleshade vowed.

Darkstar still looked a bit skeptical. "Are you sure, Mapleshade? There's absolutely no turning back."

"Yes. I'm sure." Mapleshade meowed confidently. Darkstar nodded, looking satisfied.

"Then I hereby declare you a warrior of RiverClan- not a full warrior, however- you will have to prove your loyalty." Darkstar told her. Mapleshade nodded.

"Appledusk! Why would you treat me like that!?" The dark orange she-cat behind Mapleshade wailed.

Reedshine, stop interfering!... Mapleshade mentally hissed.

"I'm sorry, Reedshine," Appledusk meowed somewhat scornfully, "But I love Mapleshade."

Reedshine let out a loud wail, and lie on the ground whimpering.

Serves her right. Mapleshade thought spitefully.

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6 moons later...

"Larchkit, Petalkit, you have both reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Larchpaw and Petalpaw. Larchpaw, you mentor will be Splashfoot. I hope Splashfoot will pass down all he knows on to you. Petalpaw, your mentor will be Eeltail. I hope Eeltail will pass down all she knows to you." Darkstar meowed proudly. The yowls of the new apprentices names rang throughout camp, as mighty as a thunderstorm. Mapleshade yowled the loudest, pride and happiness gleaming in her eyes. Larchpaw and Petalpaw's eyes gleamed with excitement. Darkstar waited to speak again.

Mapleshade licked Patchkit, who was right next to her, several more times.

"We have one more apprentice to announce." Darkstar revealed. The Clan looked confused, but it seemed that they got it after a few moments. Darkstar cleared her throat.

"Patchkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Patchpaw. Your mentor will be Puddlefur. I hope Puddlefur will pass down all she knows on to you." Darkstar declared, glancing at Puddlefur, the medicine cat. Patchpaw ran up to Puddlefur to touch noses with her. The Clan yowled in joy.

"Patchpaw! Patchpaw! Patchpaw!"

So basically, in short, if Mapleshade's kits had lived...

-Appledusk would have stayed with Mapleshade
-Reedshine would go to the Dark Forest instead of Mapleshade, and she would have hated Mapleshade for the rest of her life (Reedshine

would go to the Dark Forest out of envy and anger, and attempted to kill Mapleshade and her kits, as well as Appledusk while she [Reedshine] was still alive, with Reedshine ultimately failing and being exiled. Reedshine would have died as a rouge, like Mapleshade did when her kits drowned and she was exiled).
-Mapleshade would have gone to StarClan instead of the Dark Forest
-Patchpaw would have become RiverClan's next medicine cat, and would later be known as Patchleaf.
-Larchpaw would become Larchclaw, and Petalpaw would later become Petaldusk in honor of Appledusk.
-Larchclaw would become deputy and then leader, choosing Petaldusk as his deputy.
-Petaldusk would eventually retire, and Larchstar would choose Crookedjaw as his deputy.
-Reedshine would have forced Crookedjaw to make his promise instead of Mapleshade, making Reedshine the antagonist of Crookedstar's Promise.
-Mapleshade would die in a battle between RiverClan and ThunderClan over Sunningrocks, and Appledusk would die of old age.
-During the battle between StarClan and the Dark Forest, Reedshine, being envious of Spottedleaf, would have killed Spottedleaf instead of Mapleshade killing Spottedleaf, since Mapleshade would have had no reason to kill Spottedleaf (plus they would both be on StarClan's side).